Matt Davis

Honors Humanities

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The book, *The Alchemist*, written by Paulo Coelho is a fascinating read of adventure. The main character, Santiago, is on a journey to find hidden treasure. The book begins by his occupation being a shepherd. During the first chapters, he attends his flocks and speaks to them. One night while sleeping at a church, he dreams of finding a treasure. Due to the dream, he sets out on a journey to find the treasure.

Prior to his adventure, he seeks a fortunate teller, in the town of Tarifa to see if she can help to locate this treasure. While visiting Tarifa, he explains to the fortunate teller how in his dream he was approached by a young boy while in his fields. Then the boy transports him to a pyramid. Right before the boy tells Santiago where the treasure is located, he awakes! Once finishing telling his dream, the fortunate teller requires no fee; but instead desires ten percent of his treasure found. While casually reading in Tarifa, an elderly man approaches Santiago. After having conversation about the book, the man introduces himself as Melchizedek, the King of Salem. The man promises he will help Santiago find his treasure is he gives one-tenth of his sheep to him. Santiago believes the man is crazy as well as works for the fortunate teller. Convincing clues that Melchizedek gave to Santiago were the names of his parents and the seminary where he had attended.

In the days following, Melchizedek describes that Santiago can find his treasure in the Egyptian pyramids. Due to this fact, or clue, Santiago buys a ticket for a ship to set sail for Africa. When in Africa, he experiences a culture shock while seeing the interaction between the citizens. Santiago meets a young man at the market, who promises to buy him camels to travel. While waiting all night, he discovers that he has been robbed. He decides to postpone his travels and get a job in the town. He works for a crystal merchant in exchange for food. Over the next year, he cleans the crystal everyday to gain enough money for the trip.

Overall, I do enjoy this book and the storyline it contains. I do like reading adventure and history stories, so it is a nice mixture of the two. The book is a little dry in action and adventure and is slow at times. I wonder what the inspiration to the story is; maybe it was Coelho’s dream as a boy or just his imagination. I hope the novel does pick up in excitement throughout the rest of the book.

I believe an inherent human characteristic that Santiago has is hard working. The dream he had must have been very clear and life-like to set out on an adventure. First, he seeks a fortunate teller to help with guidance. Following, he sets out on a ship to sail to Africa to the Egyptian pyramids. Next, after being robbed of most possessions (money being most important), he decides to become employed and work for the cost of the journey. I am not sure I would have done this; I would have just quit then and there and sailed back home to attend my fields. I believe this child is extremely hard working and will do whatever it takes to find his treasure. This behavior will continue throughout the book.